

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is rabies and how do people get it?

Rabies is caused by a virus which can infect all mammals, including man. In New Mexico, skunks, bats, and foxes are the reservoirs for rabies and can transmit it to people, pets, livestock or other wild animals. Rabid pets, livestock and wild animals can then transmit rabies to people.

Can you contract rabies if a rabid animal's saliva, blood, urine or feces gets into your eyes, nose, mouth or by petting a rabid animal?

The rabies virus is found in the saliva and brain of rabid animals. It can be transmitted through a bite or by getting saliva in a wound; rarely by getting virus in the eye or mouth. Contact with blood, urine, feces or merely petting a rabid animal are not exposures to rabies.

If I am exposed to rabies what are my chances of survival?

When appropriate medical care and anti-rabies vaccinations are given after an exposure to rabies, chances of survival are excellent; however, untreated rabies exposure can be fatal.

If my pet has been vaccinated and is bitten by a rabid animal, is my pet safe?

If an animal that is previously vaccinated is exposed to a rabid animal, it should receive a booster dose of rabies vaccine. Unvaccinated pets exposed to rabies need to be euthanized or isolated for 6 months under the direction of local animal control.

Can I vaccinate my own animals for rabies?

New Mexico law requires rabies vaccination to be done by or under the supervision of a licensed veterinarian.

WHEN SHOULD I CALL SOMEONE?

- If a person or a pet has been injured by a wild or domestic animal.
- If you see a wild animal (fox, coyote, bobcat, etc) that is sick, acting strangely compared to its normal behavior, or recently dead.

WHO DO I CALL?

- Report any wild animal that appears sick, is acting abnormally, or is recently dead to the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish:
 - ◊ Weekdays (8-5) at (575) 532-2100 (Las Cruces) for southern New Mexico
 - ◊ After hours, weekends, and other areas in New Mexico call (505) 827-9376 (Santa Fe)
- A USDA/Wildlife Services Biologist is also available to take reports about sick, abnormal acting or recently dead wild animals, 24/7, at (505) 967-7811.
- Wild animal bites to pets should be reported to a local animal control officer. Call your local veterinarian for wound care and possible rabies vaccine booster for your pet.
- If a person is bitten by a wild animal they should wash the wound thoroughly with soap and water and seek medical attention. The New Mexico Department of Health is available 24/7 at (505) 827-0006 to take calls from health care providers regarding animal bites and rabies prophylaxis.



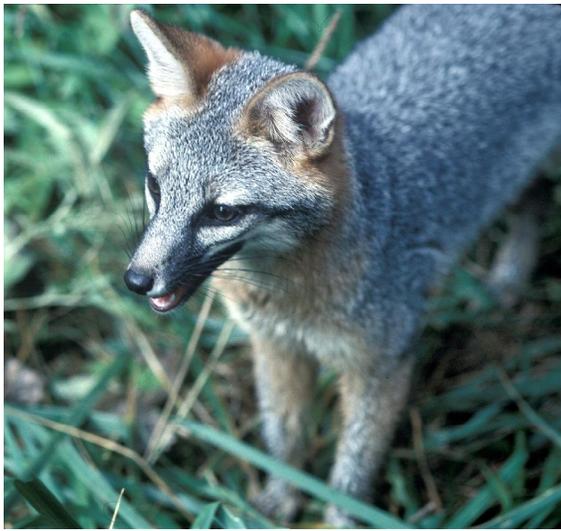
Fox Rabies in New Mexico

Fox rabies was first detected in New Mexico in the Glenwood area of Catron County in 2007 and has spread into Grant, Hidalgo and Sierra Counties. Fox rabies may spread into new areas of New Mexico in the future.



To protect human and animal health, local, state and federal agencies are recommending the following actions:

- **Become informed about rabies in your local community**
- **Vaccinate dogs, cats, horses, and other valuable livestock**
- **Learn about ways to reduce your risk and your families risk of being exposed to rabies**



RABIES QUICK FACTS

- In New Mexico, skunks and bats have been the historic reservoirs for rabies. Recently, foxes in southwest New Mexico counties have also been found to carry the rabies virus. This fox rabies strain has the potential to spread to new areas in the future.
- Rabies in wild animals tends to cycle with the size of their populations; it can be more noticeable in some years, less in others.
- Other wildlife (coyotes, bobcats, etc.) and unvaccinated dogs, cats, horses and livestock can become infected with rabies from the bite of a rabid animal and then potentially expose people to the rabies virus.
- New Mexico state law permits killing a fox **only** by individuals who hold a valid trapping license during furbearer season, or by individuals protecting property or because of a perceived safety risk.



If you are an individual with a disability who is in need of an auxiliary aid or service, please contact the Extension Service at (575) 388-1559.

IS ORAL BAITING EFFECTIVE?

Use of oral rabies vaccine (ORV) applied by aircraft over large areas can serve to immunize susceptible animals such as foxes and coyotes. This technique has been successfully used in the U.S., Canada, and France to suppress or eliminate rabies in certain species. However, ORV is both labor intensive and costly and requires treatments covering large areas, often for many consecutive years. Also, ORV baits and strategies have not been developed for skunk or bat rabies so these strains will continue to be present even if other rabies strains are eliminated. State and federal agencies have considered several different ORV scenarios for potential use against fox rabies in NM, however, there is currently no available funding to implement these strategies. For additional information on ORV go to:

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife_damage/oral_rabies/

MORE INFORMATION

Further information on rabies can be found at the New Mexico Department of Health's website: www.health.state.nm.us/ERD/HealthData/rabies.shtml

AGRO GUARD



**NEW MEXICO
DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH**



These projects are supported by Sub-grant #2004-GE-T4-0005-AgroGuard Training, awarded by the OEM through a federal grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of State and Local Government Coordination and Preparedness (SLGCP). Points of view or opinions expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the OEM, SLGCP or the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

REDUCING YOUR RISK AND BECOMING PART OF THE SOLUTION

- Make sure that your dogs, cats and horses are up-to-date on their rabies vaccinations. This is the best measure you can take to prevent you and your family from being exposed to rabies.
- Control your pets: keep cats inside and dogs on a leash or in a fenced yard to prevent them from roaming.
- Have domestic animals spayed or neutered to reduce the risk of roaming stray pets that might be unvaccinated and get rabies.
- Have stray animals removed from your area (contact an animal control officer).
- Stay calm and move away from wild animals especially if they seem sick, aggressive or overly-friendly.
- Teach your children never to touch a wild animal, especially if it appears sick or friendly, or is dead.
- Wash any wound from an animal bite thoroughly with soap and water and seek medical attention.
- Remember that feeding wild animals conditions them to residential areas and may attract other wildlife species that may become a nuisance.
- Animal-proof your home and yard: Make sure all garbage containers have tight-fitting lids, do not leave pet food or water outside, do not allow rainwater to collect in outdoor containers or equipment, and keep yard free of garbage and debris.

New Mexico State University is an equal opportunity employer. All programs are available to everyone regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, handicap, or national origin. New Mexico State University and U. S. Department of Agriculture cooperating.